Class code: MCC-UE 9454

Instructor Details:
S. Romi Mukherjee
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Class Details:
Global Media Seminar – Media, Politics, and Culture in France

Tu: 4:00 – 5:30 / Thur.: 5:00 – 6:30
Room 4.08 – NYU-Paris

Prerequisites:
General Background in Media Studies and Cultural Theory

Class Description:
This seminar examines the role of French media in reflecting, refracting, and shaping French political and cultural life. We focus on how growing “mediatisation” and mass communications have served to mold French attitudes, subjectivities, and mentalities in a context-sensitive nexus of power-desire-consumption-reification. Drawing on critical theory, anthropology, semiotics, and sociology, we attempt to explore how the media interpolate French experience in both historical and quotidian terms through processes of anchorage, stereotyping, inter-textual signification, mystification, and the narrativisation and naturalization of ideology. Moreover, recognizing France to be embedded in a larger regime of global mediatisation, this seminar also attempts to comparatively reflect on France’s position in the media-scapes of the hyper-modern. Hence, we also look at how the codes of global media are appropriated and refashioned in the French context while also examining how French media is perceived beyond France itself. From a methodological perspective this seminar transposes the key insights of contemporary media studies on to the French context in hopes of illuminating the French media field as both heterogenous and paradigmatic. We will also read key French media theorists and examine how their arguments function as responses to the national climate. While examining “media” in the normative sense of the term (film, radio, TV, advertising, newspapers, digital media, institutions) we also critically interrogate the circulation of French cultural artefacts, icons, representations, political images, cartoons, and spectacle that form the substrate of French social life. Courses will also have regular “media analyses” where concrete media examples will be studied in relation to the critical texts read.

Desired Outcomes:
This seminar is intended to develop critical “reading practices” in relationship to global and French mediaspheres (media being broadly construed as film, radio, TV and also spectacle, scene, technology, and visual fields). It aspires to, moreover, engender rigorous cross-cultural perspectives on media that foreground the dissonances and semblances found in how both American and France “represent” themselves and tarry with the forces of globalization. Eliding conventional art historical paradigms, it stresses empirical approaches to media culture which apprehend the reception and experience of the media object and then go on to form critical theoretical approaches on the basis of such empiricism. Intensive in scope, students keep media logs which recount their encounter which French mediology, culminating in a final research project where their observations are systematized and synthesized into a larger scholarly and scientific framework.
**Class Participation:** this is a discussion course. Much of each class session will consist of moderated discussion of the texts/images, following an introductory, thematic lecture. It is therefore imperative that students read and think about the assigned reading material so as to be able to participate meaningfully in class discussions.

**Mid-Term and Final Exams:** Students will have 2 take-home exams with questions to be pre-distributed.

Class Debates: There will be a class-debate on Blasphemy and Free Speech

“Show and Tell:” Students will be invited to present a “media object” to the class with a brief analysis.

**Assessment Expectations**

**Grade A:** Exceeded expectations of the class, produced work on the par of an up and coming scholar.

**Grade B:** Fulfilled the requirements of the class in a satisfactory manner.

**Grade C:** Requirements of the class just barely fulfilled in a generally lackluster fashion.

**Grade D:** Requirements of the class not fulfilled.

**Grade F:** Failure to engage with the course at all.

**Grading Conversion**

- A = 16 Félicitations
- A- = 15 Excellent
- B+ = 14 Très bien
- B = 13 Bien
- B- = 12 Encourageant/Assez bien
- C+ = 11 Moyen plus
- C = 10 Moyen
- C- = 9 Passable
- D+ = 8
- D = 7
- D- = 6

**Grading Policy**

NYU Paris aims to have grading standards and results in all its courses similar to those that prevail at Washington Square.
Here is NYU’s Attendance Policy for students studying away at a Global Academic Center:

Study abroad at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centers is mandatory, and unexcused absences will affect students’ semester grades. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. Repeated absences in a course may result in failure.

Beginning Fall 2014, at all Global Academic Centers, unexcused absences will be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student’s final course grade.

Other guidelines specific to NYUParis include:

- **Attendance to class and all course-related events, even outside of regularly scheduled course times, is expected and mandatory. Some class outings/make-up classes take place on Fridays**
- **Under no circumstances will non-University-related travel constitute an excused absence from class. DO NOT book travel until you have received and carefully studied the syllabus of each of your classes.**
- **If you are not sick enough to go to the doctor, you are well enough to go to class.** Doctor’s notes will be expected for all medical-related absences.
- **No tests, quizzes, or exams will be made up.** A missed test, quiz, or exam will result in a zero. Questions about this policy should be directed to the Academic Affairs team, not your professor.

Late work will be docked a half a letter grade per day.

Late Submission of Work

New York University in Paris, as an academic community, is committed to free and open inquiry, to creating an intellectual and social environment that promotes this, and to upholding the highest standards of personal and academic integrity.

All NYUP students have the responsibility to uphold these stated objectives. As a member of this community, you accept the responsibility for upholding and maintaining these standards, which include refraining from all forms of plagiarism and cheating as detailed below.

Cases of plagiarism at NYUParis will be brought to the attention of NYUParis academic administration as well as the implicated student’s home school Dean.

PLAGIARISM: a form of fraud, presenting someone else’s work as though it were your own

- A sequence of words from another writer who you have not quoted and referenced in footnotes
- A paraphrased passage from another writer’s work that you have not cited.
- Facts or ideas gathered and reported by someone else
- Another student’s work that you claim as your own
- A paper that is purchased or “researched” for money
- A paper that is downloaded free of charge from the Internet

CHEATING

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1 NYU’s “Policies and procedures for students studying away at a Global Academic Center”

2 NYU’s Expository Writing Department’s Statement on Plagiarism

3 NYU Statement on Plagiarism

4 NYU Statement on Plagiarism
- Copying from another student’s exam or quiz
- Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance (crib sheets, internet, etc.) during an exam or quiz
- Having someone take your exam
- Accessing an exam or quiz in an unauthorized fashion prior to its administration
- Collaborating with other students or unauthorized persons on a take home exam
- Using the same written material for two courses without the express permission of both instructors
- Fabricating or falsifying data

Required Text(s)
Reader & PDFs to be distributed to students.

Supplemental Text(s) (not required to purchase as copies are in NYU-L Library)
N/A (distributed to students as need be).

Internet Research Guidelines
Responsible use of scholarly sites (JSTOR/TAND/BLACKWELL etc.) is permitted as well as rigorous journalism and/or social commentary.

Additional Required Equipment
N/A

Session 1
Introduction and Methodological Issues
Contextualizing Media in the French Experience
1/19 – 1/21
- Raymond Kuhn, Selections from The Media in France
- Phillip Gordon and Sophie Meunier, “Globalization and French Cultural Identity”

Celticism, Celtitude, and Celticity: From Vercingétorix to Astérix and Obélix
1/26 – 1/28
- Eliza Bourque Dandridge, Selections from Producing Popularity: The Success in France of the Comics Series “Astérix le Gaulois
- Media Analysis: Clips from cartoon and film-series of Astérix and Obélix, and exposé of Celtic imagery in French popular media.
Session 3
Les Années Folles, Exoticism, and the Birth of Mass Communications
- Selections from Walter Benjamin, The Arcades Project

Jazz, Africa, and Josephine Baker
- Media Analysis: Images from “the roaring 20s” and Paul Colin, Le Tumulte Noir.

Session 4
Mythologies
- Roland Barthes, “Myth Today,” from Mythologies, pp. 1-26
- Selections from Barthes, Mythologies
- Media Analysis: “New Mythologies”

Colonial Mediatisations
- Mallek Alloula, Selections from The Colonial Harem.
- Media Analysis: Colonial Post-Cards and Contemporary media representations of the colonized subject.

Session 5
Memory, Media, and the Construction of the Past
2/16 – 2/18

Media and Malaise
- Zygmunt Bauman, Selections from “Liquid Life”
- Peter Sloterdijk, “On Cynical Reason”
- Benjamin Barber, from “Consumed

Session 6
Class Debate on Blasphemy and Free Speech
2/24 – 2/26
Discussing Blasphemy: Policy Perspectives
- Talal Asad, from Is Critique Secular: Blasphemy, Injury, and Free Speech, pp. 64 -100
- Media Analysis: Danish Cartoons of Mohammed and Caricatures from French newspaper Charlie-Hebdo
Session 7
3/1 – 3/3
Film Screening “Breathless”
(Mid-Terms Due)

New Waves
- Geneviève Sellier, Selections from *Masculine Singular: French New Wave Cinema*
- Media Analysis: Film Screening – Jean Luc Godard, *Breathless*, (1960)

Session 8
3/8 – 3/10
Special UNESCO Session on the Ethics of the Information Society
- Readings TBD

NBIC Technologies: Post-Humanism and “Informatic Man”

Session 9
3/15-3/17
Media, Marketing, and Commodity Fetishism
- Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*

Media and May ‘68
- Marc Rohan, Selections from *Paris ’68: Graffiti, Posters, Newspapers, and Poems from the Events of May ’68*
- Media Analysis: Revolutionary Posters, Press, and Graffiti from May ’68

Session 10
3/22-3/24
Debray and Mediology
- Regis Debray, *Media Manifestos*

Theorising Television
- Pierre Bourdieu, *On Television*
- Media Analysis: Bourdieu watches the Olympics

Session 11
3/29 – 3/31
March 31st: Film Screening of La Haine

April 2nd: Discussion of La Haine and Depictions of the French Banlieue

Session 12
4/5 – 4/7
April 7th: Hip-Hop in France
- Selections from ed. Tony Mitchell, *Global Noise: Rap and Hip-Hop Outside the USA*, pp. 57-87
- Media Analysis – French hip-hop clips.

April 9th: MediaScapes, EthnoScapes, GlobalScapes
- Arjun Appadurai: Disjunction and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy
Steven Field, “A Sweet Lullaby for World Music

Session 13
April 14: Show and Tell I
-Student Presentations

April 16th: Show and Tell II
- Student Presentations

Session 14
May 5th: Conviviality and Cosmopolitanism: Ali G and the Office
Paul Gilroy, Selections from Post-Colonial Melancholia

May 7th: Wrap-Up

Classroom Etiquette
- No eating in class.
- No cell phones in class.
- No laptop computers in class unless permission is expressly given by your professors.
- Leaving class to go to the bathroom or yawning in class is considered rude in France.

Required Co-curricular Activities
N/A

Suggested Co-curricular Activities
N/A

Your Instructor
S. Romi Mukherjee received his B.A., M.A, and Ph.d from the University of Chicago where his thesis, in the sociology and history of religions, examined the politics of the sacred in inter-war France. He is currently Assistant Professor in religion and politics at SciencesPo-Paris and co-editor of the English edition of La Revue de Synthèse. He is also visiting lecturer at New York University in Paris. Between 2006 and 2009, he was a researcher at the Interdisciplinary Center for Comparative Research in the Social Sciences (CIR-Paris) where he worked on a series of European Commission research projects (Framework 7) concerning inter alia the French Republic and pluralism, secularism and the return of religion, and collective memory. Since 2009, he has been affiliated with UNESCO in various capacities, most recently as associate researcher in the Social and Human Sciences Sector where he works on issues pertaining to the ethics and anthropology of technology and the question of humanism in the age of the anthropocene. He has published over 40 articles, mostly in political theory and the history of religions, and is the editor of Durkheim and Violence (Blackwell, 2010) The Political Anthropology of the Global (Blackwell, 2011) and Social Memory and Hypermodernity (Blackwell, 2012, with Éric Brian et Marie Jaisson). His current research project is entitled “The Trials of Marianne: The French Republic and the Sacred.”